MID MICHIGAN ATARI MAGAZINE

Atari News

Not one but TWO new user groups join MID-MICHGAN ATARI MAGAZINE this month... Plus a message from the publisher, inside!

Two new ST magazines are making their way into users' hands. ST BUSINESS is an independant bi-monthly ($30 for six issues), and is aimed at the small business user (Check your user group library for a sample copy). STuser is a monthy magazine from England, republished and distributed from Canada. It's a chunky issue for serious programmers and users, and runs $35 a year. (G-Plus Computer Products, 130 Albert-Suite B-8, Ottawa, Ontario K1P5G4.

Sig Hartmann, ATARI Vice President, is now heading the BIG BUSINESS/ MANUFACTURER/ UNIVERSITY sales and promotion department. He encourages those who would like to SAVE BIG CORPORATE MONEY to call him at (408) 745-4967, before they buy something from the overpriced/underpowered competition. Offered are terminal emulators and other applications.

What's the best selling computer of all time? To date, the ATARI 2600 game computer (with 1/8th K of memory) has outsold any other computer product with over 20 million units!

How about corporate ranking of "real" computers? PC WEEK reports 1.7 million IBM units (all) sold in '85 for first place with 29.6% of the market. It was not ATARI's best year, but they did a respectable fifth place (with 5.5%) behind APPLE, COMMODORE, and TANDY, beating COMPAQ, H-P, ZENITH, and WANG. '86 figures should be better.

ATARI STOCK opened at $11.50 in November and has climbed to $14 in the month since. Are you rich yet?

ATARI says in their October USER GROUP NEWS that they are actually going to have a TV commercial for the XE computers. But the XE will be touted as an "ultimate game machine" rather than as a serious computer. Sigh.

The same issue of the NEWS describes their "BBS", actually FIVE independant ST sytems running the MICHTRON software. Call 408-745-5308, but beware, the system will arbitrarily switch you to an available line, and you need a password on EACH separate system. Hard to believe that ATARI can't come up with true MULTI USER.

HYUNDAI (the Korean automaker) is now also in the computer business. Marketing the "BLUE CHIP" PC clone for about $700 complete, Hyundai will sell them through DISCOUNT MERCHADISE STORES. John Rossi, president of Blue Chip, says "Commodore and Atari have done well" in that type distribution. They should be seen in TARGET stores (a Dayton-Hudson discount house) and then many others by the time you read this... where the ATARI's USED to be seen. GEE, we aren't even safe in TOYS 'R US anymore!

Volley after volley have been launched in the pages of COMPUTER SHOPPER magazine pitting the AMIGA and ST against each other. In November, "THE MYTH OF ST SUPERIORITY" attempted to smear the ST with rumors, out-of-date information, and just plain predjudice. Fortunately, even while cutting up the ST as comapred to the AMIGA, author Sheldon Leemon had to conceed on many points that the ST was in fact a very capable machine. Even though there was a very well written rebuttal by D.F. Scott in the January issue, the entire discussion does nothing but help the reputation of the ST... a machine that MAY or MAY NOT be as "good" as or "better" than the AMIGA but IS HALF the price.

CASTLE COMMUNICATIONS

1716 E. Michigan Avenue
Lansing, Michigan 48912
Ph.(517) 371-4321

Hours: 10am-7pm Mon-Fri
        10am-6pm Saturday
        Closed Sunday

SUBMISSIONS

Submissions from readers are encouraged. If
possible, please make your submissions by
electronic means. Submissions are accepted on
the C.H.A.O.S. BBS (517-371-1106), or on
disk-by mail or by giving a disk to an Editor.
All submissions must be received by the 20th to
be considered for the next month's issue.

NOTES TO OTHER CLUBS

Please be certain that you are mailing to the
correct address (be sure which club it is that
is exchanging this magazine with you!) (See
below) and NOT to the return mail address.
Exchanges of newsletters are encouraged.

We are also soliciting other Michigan Atari
clubs for affiliation with the Mid-Michigan
Atari Magazine. We can offer MORE total pages
and LOWER production costs per copy, with no
loss in your local input. Contact C.H.A.O.S.
for more information.

Editor's Note

Rich Barnes - Managing Editor
MID-MICHIGAN ATARI MAGAZINE
(517) 349-0513

Here we are entering a new year and again we
have added not only one, but two new groups.
We would like to welcome the Greater Kalamazoo
Atari User Group and the Washtenaw Atari Users
Group from the Ann Arbor, Washtenaw Area.
Welcome to the group.

We ended last year on somewhat of a sour note
with the members of at least two of our member
clubs. This was caused by the late arrival of
the Mid-Michigan Atari Magazine. As you all
remember, we had moved our deadline to the
20th. of the month were it will remain in hopes
of getting these issuses to you in time.
Everyone co-operated and submitted the required
materials on time, we processed the articles
and ads, got them to the printer and returned
from the printer with plenty of time to spare.
We bundled the newsletters and got them to the
mail room at MSU with time to spare. We
managed to be well within the time limits and
everyone should have received their issue on
time.

When after eight days, we had not heard any
comments from the readership, we knew something
had gone wrong. John checked at the MSU mail
room and immediately located the problem. The
Mid-Michigan Atari Magazines had NOT LEFT YET!
Even the few issues to be mailed First Class
had not moved. This was an unexcusable and
extensive delay. John "spoke" with both the
manager and the supervisor of the MSU mail room
and they both now live in fear of any further
incident (John is very large and can be very
loud). Arrangements have been made to totally
bypass the MSU system and result in faster than
ever service from now on.

No matter the reason, we are ultimately
responsible for getting this magazine to you.
For that reason, I personally apologize to all
of you for the delay of the last issue. We
will do our best to get future issues to you in
time.

Just a quick note, check the ads closely for
the various items available! Often a free
catalog is available for the cost of an 800
phone call! When responding, please mention
our magazine, as that is what makes them repeat
advertisers.

VIEWPOINT

PAST AND FUTURE-
MID-MICHIGAN ATARI MAGAZINE
From the Publisher
John Nagy (517) 487-5646

This is our first January issue at MID-MICHIGAN
ATARI MAGAZINE, and it's a good time to look
back at what we have done, and where we are
going.

Lansing's ATARI club, the Capitol Hill Atari
Owners' Club (C.H.A.O.S.), started MID-MICHIGAN
ATARI MAGAZINE in July, 1986. For several
years, C.H.A.O.S. had been included in the
computer club magazine ENERGY (put out by the
MICHIGAN COMPUTER CONSORTIUM, Lansing area clubs
of several brands). Despite being one of the
founding groups of the Consortium and ENERGY
magazine, C.H.A.O.S. was certain that now it
could do more for its members than settling for
the 5-6 pages afforded ATARI by the 20-page
ENERGY magazine.

We have seen exchange newsletters from a hundred
other ATARI clubs from around the country, and
learned from what we liked and disliked about
ENERGY and all the other newsletters.

Several things seemed to be critical:
APPEARANCE, CONCEPT, and CONTENT. From our
experience with ENERGY, we knew that a better,
larger product could be made if the efforts,
money, and circulation of several groups with
similar interests were pooled. We felt a
newsletter of dissimilar computer clubs in one
city didn't work for us, but that an all-ATARI
collection of clubs from different cities could
work great.

MID-MICHIGAN ATARI MAGAZINE was born. I took
the general development, printing, and editing
duties, Leo Sell helped by writing and looking
for quality reprintable articles, and Jeff Bone
worked hard on appearance, layout and art. We
each helped get advertisers.

By the time we printed our second issue in
August, we were ready to try to recruit other
clubs. We had developed a format, a set of
continuing columns and an attractive, orderly
presentation laid out in a consistant, orderly
fashion. We had a booklet form, professionally
reproduced, of 28 pages or more. We scorned
"printouts" of graphic screens unless to
illustrate an important part of an article.
ONLY ONE printer and font was used to generate
all articles. We re-keyed quality articles from
other newsletters to get them into our page
stlye and font. ANTIC ONLINE was used but
heavily excerpted to include only the meat.

Heavily technical articles were avoided unless
balanced by good beginner pieces. TYPE-IN
programs over a half column long were skipped.
Variety, articles of no more than 2 pages, a
focus on general interest rather than
specialities were the watchwords. Full
integration of 8- and 16-bit machine information
was intentional.

The formula worked. The magazine has received
raves from local and national computer
columnists. We are widely quoted and reprinted
(recently in ANTIC and in FAMILY COMPUTING).
Since August, at least one additional ATARI user
group has joined our Magazine each month. They
contribute club-specific pages plus feature
articles and advertising. We enter 1987
prepared to put out a 40+ page magazine each
month to a subscriber base of over 700 ATARI
users, plus counter sales at many locations.
Richard and Judy Barnes have joined our effort
and handle most of the production and editing
co-ordination. Marvin Goldstein and Harmon
Everett each are involved in sales and business.
I am (give or take) "Publisher" with and for
C.H.A.O.S., handling printing and distribution
arrangements as well as new club contacts,
promotions, and policy. Each of the "member"
clubs have a local editor. For an all-volunteer
non-profit effort, things are sailing.

At this point, several problems and
possibilities present themselves. These include
UNDERFUNDING vs. OVERSUPPLY OF MATERIAL, and
"BIT POLITICS".

As we expand into much of the state, our
circulation makes us a very attractive vehicle
for national advertising. Our rates are very
reasonable, about the same as many club
newsletters that reach 25% of the number that
receive MID-MICHIGAN ATARI MAGAZINE. Yet, we
are short of enough advertising to produce the
size magazine we would like. This is due to the
failure of some of the member clubs to
participate in the sales effort.

At this writing, Rich has at least ten articles
waiting for a chance to see print. Despite
generally few feature contributions from each
club, the combined total (plus quality reprint
material) makes an outstanding pool of material.
Each month we have had to throw away articles
that have gone out of date while waiting for
room. This seems an unbelievable thing to
complain about considering the "no material"
chant that most newsletters give. We are only
sorry that we don't have the revenue to support
the 40-48 pages a month that we could easily
fill with prime articles. Only more sales
support by member clubs will make this possible.

Lastly, we are being asked (by some groups that
are considering joining in the magazine) to make
some changes in the structure of MID-MICHIGAN
ATARI MAGAZINE. Specifically, it is suggested

that we divide the 8-bit and 16-bit articles into separate sections, or even eliminate one or the other machine. This was the ANTIC and ANALOG approach, and now they are drawing fire for it from both sides of the STreet. I personally am convinced that "BIT POLITICS", the split between the 8- and 16-bit owners, is the single biggest threat to the future success of both groups in organized clubs.

While I don't pretend to believe that exclusive ST owners ever will seriously be interested in 8-bit specific information or user tips, it is clear that nearly ALL 8-bit owners are interested in knowing what is developing for the ST series. We have typically run about 30% 8-bit specific articles, about 20% ST specific, and the remainder has been ATARI corporate or industry information and "neutral" general feature articles. With a mix like that, to split the ST into a section of its own would make its 20% look like we are ignoring it. In reality, 70% of every issue is for the ST reader, and 80% is for the 8-bit reader. Since the 8-bit owners currently outnumber the ST owners, we feel that we are suppling a satisfying mix of useful information to BOTH sets of users in our many pages.

Division can be very damaging to both the 8- and 16 bit user groups. In many cities, the ST owners have met chilly response from the existing ATARI club and have formed their own clubs. Often the "chill" continues or escalates between the groups, the 8-bit group feeling that the ST club is elitist and snobbish, and worse yet, is "stealing" the best people in the 8-bit club. The ST owners often discuss the 8-bit hardware and people with scornful "toy" terminology and "second-class" attitude, if they even think about them at all.

Although this type of antagonistic relationship has long existed between some ATARI and COMMODORE clubs, between kindred ATARI clubs it is even more destructive. Considering the growth of technology and new products, any group that holds too tightly to one technology will shrink and dissapear. By the same token, groups that are formed around the new technology will grow while that technology grows. Over the next "X" years, the ATARI 8-bit WILL continue to decline in sales, support, software, and users until a dedicated 8-bit user club will not be viable. Many of those members will migrate to the ST clubs, finally filling their ranks enough to have the organization and support to accomplish the sort of things the 8-bit groups now can (like starting regional magazines!).

Why allow one organization to die out while requiring another parallel group to arise? If we can keep our clubs somewhat together, each group can benefit from the other over time. The two ATARI computer lines CERTAINLY have far more interest areas in common with each other than

with other brands of computer. The overlap can't be 100%, but it is big enough to make good common use of limited club managment resources. Even if there are separate meetings of the two interest areas, there is a lot of reason to stay in "one house".

It will remain the policy of MID-MICHIGAN ATARI MAGAZINE to resist the split-up of the ATARI interest groups. We intend to continue to do as much as possible to satisfy all ATARI computer users.

The future DOES look good for MMAM despite the challenges that face us. I am very proud of all of the people that have made our magazine the fastest growing and best new ATARI publication. I don't think we could get much more enthusiasm from some of them if we DID pay them! The product, too, is VERY satisfying. There is NO newsletter or magazine (non-profit or commercial) that has more GOOD, READABLE articles per page of print than ours. The cost vs. return to each club is unparalleled by any single-group newsletter. And that sincerest of compliments, imitation, has begun to appear in some other states.

We are happy with our progress. We hope you are too. If the member clubs will help with the advertising, MID-MICHIGAN ATARI MAGAZINE will continue to grow, to improve, and to be worth the work.

Please contact me, or any of the local or general editors of MID-MICHIGAN ATARI MAGAZINE, if you have any ideas or opinions on the past or future of this effort- and have a GOOD YEAR in 1987!

Still de-bugging the MID-MICHIGAN ATARI MAGAZINE...
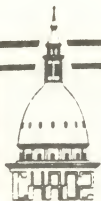
CAPITOL HILL
ATARI OWNERS SOCIETY

SERVING THE LANSING AREA ATARI

C.H.A.O.S. is the CAPITOL HILL ATARI OWNERS
SOCIETY, serving the ATARI community of the
Lansing, Michigan area. The CAMPUS HILL ATARI
OWNERS SOCIETY is the Michigan State University
chapter of C.H.A.O.S.

Membership dues are $12.00 per year and entitle
the member to a 1 year subscription to the
Mid-Michigan Atari Magazine, a free disk from
our regular library, access to our other
libraries and facilities as well as access to
our other resources.

Dues may be paid at any regular C.H.A.O.S.
meeting or by mail. If not using an official
Membership Application, please include your
Name, Address, Phone and a list of your
equipment and interests.

Sysop John Nagy and C.H.A.O.S. invite you to
call one of the country's finest BBS's at (517)
371-1106, 24 hours a day at 300/1200 baud.
(ATASCII/ASCII)

Inquiries regarding C.H.A.O.S., mail orders,
memberships and etc, should be sent to:

    C.H.A.O.S.
    PO Box 16132
    Lansing, MI 48901

Meetings take place on the 2nd and 3rd
Saturdays of each month, at the MSU
Physics-Astronomy Building, Physics Road, Room
118. Meetings begin at 10:00 am sharp and last
until 1:00 pm.
S.T.IN.G. (S.T. INterest Group), for Atari ST
owners, meets on the SECOND Saturday of the
month.
The General meeting, for 8-bit Atari owners,
takes place on the THIRD Saturday of each
month. DIRECTIONS TO MEETING PLACE:
East Grand River to the Collingwood Entrance
for MSU. The first available left turn is
Physics Rd. The Physics-Astronomy Building is
about 1 block from the corner, on the right
hand side. Park in the gated lot just past the
building.

Illegal copying and any violation of copyright
laws are not condoned or allowed at any
C.H.A.O.S. sponsored function, nor are allowed
on the club BBS.

ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICERS OF C.H.A.O.S.

Position	Name	Phone #
President	Leo Sell	349-0404
Vice President	John Nagy	487-5646
Sec'y-Treasurer	Gary Ferris	393-2593
8-bit Rep.	Adam Slonim	485-7348
16-bit Rep.	John Johnson	355-4219
Membership Coord.	Gary Ferris	393-2593
Library Manager	John Baker	641-4430
Asst. Librarian	Malcolm Cleveland	485-6743
Asst. Librarian	Sally Nagy	484-1976
ST Librarian	Mark Smathers	627-3590
Publ. Librarian	Richard Evans	351-2381
Program Coord.	Guy Hurt	484-7675
ST SIG Coord.	Brian Goluska	332-4415
BBS System Op.	John Nagy	487-5646
BBS Librarian	John Baker	641-4430
C.H.A.O.S. Editor	Jeff Bone	321-5510

Presidential address

by Leo Sell

It's hard to believe that it is 1987 already.
(It's also hard to believe that the newsletter
deadline is here so soon!!). The turn of the
year is always a good time to reflect on where
we are, have been and are going.

As I survey C.H.A.O.S. overall, I am very
satisfied. We have a large number of very
dedicated people, all pulling together to make
things work. New ideas are generated and
exciting changes are often undertaken. The
C.H.A.O.S. Libraries, 8-bit, 16-bit and
Publication, all continue to grow, mature and
improve. The BBS keeps getting better and
better and bigger and bigger. Our opportunities
for involvement and for learning, continue to
grow as C.H.A.O.S. grows. The Mid-Michigan
Atari Magazine just gets better and better as
you can see.

All in all, I believe C.H.A.O.S. is in good
condition. A big thanks to all of you who are
making it work.

Looking back to the past is always profitable.
C.H.A.O.S. started some 5 or 6 years ago (the
memories are pretty hazy now). When I joined,
it was a loose-knit group of Atari computer
owners reviewing new software, repairing
hardware, hacking out new programs and helping
each other with programming/computer problems.
Many people were willing to get deep into
programming to use their machine. Others, like
myself, were willing to wait for the right
software to do the job and to learn a little
programming just for fun. Good friendships were
made and strong foundations were laid. The
basic structure (Board, Corporation and
governance) were laid by wise individuals from
near the beginning. Ike Hudson, Rob Peck and
others, blazed the trail we follow today.

Our libraries were begun because of great
dedication by people like Guy Hurt and others.
Aggressively seeking new public domain software,
and putting it together in an organized fashion,
resulted in one of the finest bases for a
library in the country. We've been able to
build from the foundation that was laid with the
results being one of the largest, finest, and
certainly best organized disk libraries in the
country. The generosity of many people has
built up our Publications library to a point
where almost any key Atari publication can be
found there.

About half-way through its life, C.H.A.O.S.
began to run a BBS. With various locations and
software and Sysops, the beginning was rough.
Again, we owe a debt to those who saw it
through. People like Barry Schroeder and Mike
Clewley.

In many ways we also owe thanks to Energy
Magazine. Were it not for the cooperative
effort attempted there, we would undoubtedly be
publishing a boringly standard newsletter and
this magazine would never have seen the light of
day. Energy proved that a cooperative approach
can work. We applied that to the Atari
community and the results are in your hand.

So, having looked briefly at the present,
lengthily at the past, what does the future
hold.

Well, I believe that the future for C.H.A.O.S.
is bright. More and more people are getting
involved. Fine projects are continuing. As
long as all of us continue to help, C.H.A.O.S.
will grow and prosper. That means that there
will be more resources as time goes by. As time
passes, new people will be needed for our
continuing and our future projects. There will
be many opportunities for you to be involved,
and by so doing, learn more about your Atari and
fellow users than you would otherwise. I hope
you'll join in the efforts for your own sake as
well as the Club's and your fellow Atarians.

Telecom

THE C.H.A.O.S. DOWNLOAD
By John Nagy

Cold weather is keeping a lot of computerists
away from the things they really prefer- like
cutting the lawn, fixing the car, painting the
eaves, etc. Instead, they call their friendly
local BBS and see what is going on. Usually,
they find a lot. They also often find the line
in use. But that just helps make it more worth
while when they do get through.

The C.H.A.O.S. BBS is also showing the effects
of the cold... it is growing, changing, and
improving every week. Already, most users have
noticed marked improvements in the log-in delay,
the message base speed, and little touches here
and there that help you get back to where you
want to be when you get lost. More of this sort
of thing plus some exciting new features not
seen before in any BBS are on their way... if
winter lasts long enough and I can keep away
from that EXCITING YARDWORK.

The M.I.O. expansion box plus the hard disk for
te BBS are now a reality- even though as you
read this they are not online. We bought the
256K version of the M.I.O. from ICD Corp. (who
also bought a two page ad in this issue of MMAM,
part of their first advertising attempts in user
group newsletters!), along with a 10 MEG hard
disk. When all is said and done, we expect our
storage room to be VERY adaquate even for John
Baker... and the speed of access to be
REMARKABLE.

I again want to thank OSS Inc. for their
contribution to the club of a gratis copy of
BASIC XE whithout which our BBS could never have
developed as it has. Somehow, having about 100K
to program in is SOOOOOO much nicer than having
about 32K...

Also let me begin the new year right by thanking
John Baker for the terrific effort he has
consistantly done for the files section of the
BBS. I know he didn't expect the job to get so
big, but it's his fault too. (Lets see your
INDEX of all the files in the 10 MEG, John!)

You don't have a modem yet???? Check out one of
the club's 1030 MODEMs and try your club BBS!
They are available for a month loan by any
member at the meetings. You don't come to
meetings either???? Well, forget it. We can
only do so much...

Call the C.H.A.O.S. BBS, 24 HOURS, 300/1200
BAUD, AT (517) 371-1106. Til next month, SEE YA
IN CHAT!

Disk Library

by John Baker

Well it's gone. I'm referring to 1986. Seemed like it just flew by. They say the older you get, the faster time seems to pass. This must be true, for even at my age, (late teens), it's already noticeable.

Oh well, at least with the holidays behind us and the dead of winter at hand, more time can be allotted for our favorite pastime. Now I realize that everyone has their own idea as to what "favorite pastime" means to them, but hopefully computing can be squeezed in there somewhere.

Now that we're all on the same wavelength, the new library listing should be just about ready by the time you read this. Three or four disks in the old listing were either consolidated or dropped, but a whole ton of new ones were added. In fact, new disks were added right up to the time for printing of the list. The lists will either be delivered in the newsletter, at the meetings, or by dogsled. Not sure which.

Fire up that 8-bit machine and take advantage of some great software additions. Turbo-Basic, the hottest new item for computing since the keyboard is here. It's been sweeping the country and has had rave reviews. I decided to give it the acid test and called upon our award winning and revered BBS Sysop, John Nagy, to give it a look see (he hates everything). Final results are not in yet, but when I last questioned him on the subject, he mumbled something about it "not being too shabby". I almost dropped the phone!!! He was trying to say he liked it!! Check this one out for sure.

Trading with other clubs is an ongoing project and I managed to wrangle away from Jerry Cross, the Genesee Atari librarian, a really great trivia game. If you are a trivia fan, then this is a must. Hope to show it at the next meeting.

Printshop Icon files are always in demand, and I have added one new disk of them and another 3 are in the works. Koala pad "PIC" files and AMS Music files seem to be growing at an astronomical rate. They now have their own section in the library.

I also received a disk to allow me to add colorful binary logo and intro screens to any disk. Got to keep you from dozing off during the disk booting process. Look for this "new look" after I've had a chance to look through the source code for this file.

Slowly but surely many of our disk labels will also take on a more professional look thanks to the use of a commercial quality label making program. This program written by Jim Steele, president of the Genesee Atari Group, is EXCELLENT and a breeze to use. By far one of the most full featured and user friendly label programs I've seen. Jim has allowed us to use this fine program for our club labels.

Now the bad news. This program is not available to the general public. Jim is still working the bugs out of it (he's a perfectionist), and hasn't decided if he will offer it as public domain or sell it commercially. Either way, when he releases it--GET IT!!!

We've added a couple different versions of "C" and several versions of FORTH. Sally Nagy is our resident expert on these two languages and plans to make us all better acquainted with them in the near future.

Printer drivers and screen dump routines are constantly being requested. If you have written short routines to set up your printer (no matter what kind) for specific duties, please share them with us. Many new printers are sold every day, and a good number of manuals included with these printers are written in Martian. A disk compiled with a variety of setups for specific printers would be welcomed by individuals who are not fluent in Martian. Upload these drivers to the BBS with a note to me as to printer type, and what the driver does. Or print the file out and give it to me at one of the meetings.

The BBS is beginning to jump again now that colder weather has set in. Thanks to all for the great selection of files you are sending us. Sharing software with us that you enjoy enables us to offer these files to actually a national audience. Thanks too, to the members who make the monthly pilgramage to the meetings and take advantage of the excellent selection of software and information that we offer each month. Last year was a great one for CHAOS and its members. Look for 1987 to be even better.

ST

DECEMBER ST-UTTERINGS
by Brian Goluska

The ST special interest group of CHAOS meets the 2nd Saturday of each month, at the Physics-Astronomy building of MSU. See the CHAOS title page for directions.

At the December meeting 20 people attended, almost all of them ST owners. We had 2 ST's, with FIVE disk drives, and ONE monitor. So

while Mark Smathers did demos from the ST library disks, John Johnson and I demonstrated how hard it is to connect an ST to a video system without tools, cables, or knowing what I was doing. Next meeting I promise we'll be able to use the overhead viewing system. (A secret: Since the meeting I know a way to do it)!

Besides a great deal of library work, usual discussion of problems, vendors, and software comparisons took up much of the meeting. One unusual topic was electricity. One member swears by his surge protector: When an electrical problem occurred, he lost his refrigerator, TV's, and other appliances. But his surge protector blew and his computer survived. Another member said don't EVER unground your color monitor (don't use a 2 prong adapter for its 3 prong plug).

Mark Smathers also talked about the upgrade he got for his 520 ST. While he went to 1 Megabyte now, he also had sockets put in for adding the new 1 Megabit chips when they come down in price. This will allow him to go to 2 1/2 Megabytes eventually. According to Mark, this is the best that can be done without unsoldering the original chips on the motherboard. It would be possible to go to 4 Megabytes by doing extensive motherboard work.

John Johnson and Dave Spinnet concluded the meeting with a demo of Flight Simulator II for the ST (which was reviewed last month in this magazine).

As usual, I'll close with a little tip. Many programs, like First Word, show a window of file titles when you want to load from disk. For example, First Word might show A:*.DOC, and all the titles that have the extension DOC. If you want to look at another drive, like B:, you can click on the directory line, left arrow to the :, backspace, and change A to B. The result is B:*.DOC. If you click on the grey window bar, you'll get a directory of every file on B:, or B:*.*. If you click in the titles area, however, you'll get those files that match the specifier, in this case every file ending in DOC. You can, of course, change the directory line, like D:*.PIC.

STop in at the ST meeting.

Over 100 people showed up December 20 for the annual festivities of the C.H.A.O.S. Christmas meeting. Punch and cookies brought by many members made the meeting even more friendly than ususal, and the 1/2 price disks from the library kept Malcolm Cleveland and John Baker busy all meeting (they sold about 150 disks!). To top it all, everyone at the meeting got an ATARI present- the adults each got a C.H.A.O.S./ATARI keychain with a built-in pen, and several younger members got tee-shirts and posters.

More of the handsome keychains are available from Leo at the meetings for $1.00 each. They should impress your friends and just maybe help get the word out about C.H.A.O.S...

Following a short discussion period, Frank Nagy showed STAR RAIDERS II and discussed how it does in fact differ from the "LAST STARFIGHTER". Then, his wife SALLY showed and commented on a video tape showing many of the new entries in the C.H.A.O.S. Disk Library. Brian Goluska arranged to have another fine MIDI-MUSIC demo from an ST and a Casio sythesizer. The Disk-of-the-Month wrapped up the meeting, but the crowds remained to finish the cookies and get the disks they ordered. Another fine meeting. Don't miss the next one!

Publication Review

Atari Player-Missile Graphics in BASIC
Reviewed by Kurt Hozak (CHAOS)

This is the best guide to player-missile graphics that I have ever seen. I bought the book knowing virtually nothing about pmg and finished reading the book knowing everything I ever wanted to know about pmg. Other articles and books about pmg became too technical too fast. Not with this book. It starts right from the beginning and takes you to the end.

Sample programs are included in every chapter, and there is an index and appendix in the back. It is also spiral bound, which means that you can lay it flat on a desk. One feature that I really liked was that everytime they explained anything new, they asked the question that was forming in my head and gave very well explained answers.

This book covers how to set up the pmg, defining the player image, using strings with pmg to move the player vertically (which is a LOT easier than POKEing around in memory), how to define and use missiles, changing the image size, single and double line resolution, collisions, the priority register, making five players, multi-colored players, and much, much more. It is 173 pages long and is published by Reston.

This is the most used computer book that I own and I cannot recommend it enough. It belongs in every users library!

P.S. Antic is selling it discounted from $14.95 to $9.95 for the book alone, and from $24.95 to $14.95 for the both the book and the disk.

GENE/EE ATARI GROUP

Presidential Mumblings for January 1987
by Jim Steele

Happy New Year! (He says, with Christmas shopping yet begun) I'm going to cut the gab short this month, mainly because I don't have anything to say. I know that's never stopped me before, but new year's is the traditional time for resolutions,eh?

The minutes department.

Well those of you who made it to the December meeting got some nice door prizes. In fact, there were enough goodies left over for everyone to get two prizes. Some of those laser cut desk sets were really snazzy. Fortunately, a riot was averted when the officer's cards started to show up first.

In other news, the timeliness of the newsletter was discussed. We also considered moving the meeting to the third Wednesday as a cure for the problem, but decided that this would cause too many conflicts with holidays. Atari planetarium was finally shown. Jerry brought his MIO board and although we ran out of time for a formal demo, we were all impressed with it. We plan to have a more complete presentation on this goodie in the future.

Well, so much for January's mumblage, see you next time,
                                    —Jim

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Next Meetings:

January 14,1987	6:30pm regular meeting
January 24,1987	9:30am Saturday session
February 11,1987	6:30pm regular meeting.
February 28,1987	9:30am Saturday session
March 11,1987	6:30pm regular meeting
March 28,1987	9:30am Saturday session

ST Disk Library

ST NEWS AND VIEW FROM FLINT
by Gil Merciez

Now that Christmas and all of these other silly holidays are behind us, its time to get down to some serious computing. I hope that you have squirreled away a couple of dollars in the back of one of your desk drawers so that you will be snatch up a few of the new GAG ST disks that will be available in January. There will be at least 3 new disks available to bring the total to 34 disks with over 10 megabytes of public domain software.

My wish came true last month and the newsletter didn't reach you until after the December meeting. No doubt, many of you missed the one time Christmas special where all GAG disks were $3. Maybe I'll run the special again in the coming months. <Then again, maybe I won't!> I will try to have enough copies of disk catalogs available so that everyone can take one home with them. I'm also toying with the idea of offering mail order service on the disks for those who can't make the meetings. What do you think of this idea? Let me know and if I get enough positive feedback I may let this idea fly. I will even absorb the cost of mailing. Would't be a bad deal for $4 a disk.

In January look for Tiny Pictures Volume 7 which includes numerous pictures of Big Cats. For the more prurient minded I may package an 'R' rated disk of pics in February. Any comments on this idea? The disk would be properly labeled so as not to offend anyone.

On Disk #32 look for a great graphic advertisement for the Atlantist BBS which includes an interesting picture and a talking blurb. This file incorporated one of the speech synthesizers that was available on a GAG disk in December. Also on #32 is a program called Easytos which is an unfinished version of the GEM desktop that makes it more Mac like and is actually quite a bit faster. It is not a

working version but it incorporates many nice ideas. A working demo of a space shuttle simulation is also included. This demo is from Michtron and the game should be available soon. Also look for a Star Trek game and a Slot Machine program.

Many more goodies await you in the GAG library. Don't miss a single disk.

FACTS AND THE ST

For those who are unaware, FACTS BBS, Jerry Cross Sysop, is back on line after an extended absence due to a faulty hard drive. With 10 megabytes of storage capacity there is more than enough room for both the 8 bit and 16 bit user to to coexist on this board. I have been adding ST downloads to the board as time permits and the number is growing. Give the board a call at (313)736-3920 and check it out.

I know many of you are new to modems and telecommunications so I'll give you a few hints and tips on using Jerry's Board. FACTS runs on an Atari 8 bit computer and uses the Express BBS program. Express was written exclusively for Atari 8 bit boards and as such lacks some niceties that ST users could take advantage of. When logging on for the first time it is important to write down the password that will be given to you. If you lose or forget this password, you will have to sign up again using a different name.

Once you have logged in and read the system bulletins you will be faced with a command line. Pressing '?' from any command line will give you the complete menu. 'Q' will quickscan through all the message bases letting you read all new messages that have been posted since the last time you have logged on. A deficiency in the public message base boards is that you can't address a message to a particular individual if you start a new thread or topic. It will automatically be addressed to all. This is not all that bad as there are usually not that many messages to wade through. The message base editor is easy to use with the only drawback being that it is irrevocably set to 40 columns.

For those interested in downloading ST programs, enter 'B' to browse through download sections V-Z. <These are the ST specific sections.> After deciding on a file to download enter 'D', then the filename when prompted. Make sure that your terminal is set to plain vanilla 8 bit checksum Xmodem protocol. Express doesn't support CRC error checking and will error you out if you are in the CRC mode unless your terminal program is smart enough to automatically switch.

Almost all of the ST download files are in the ARC format which means they must be dearced using ARC.TTP before you can run them. If you wish to upload files and share them with the rest of the ST community, please ARC the files. This is done for two reasons. The primary reason is save both disk space and downloading and uploading time. An arced file is generally between 40-60% smaller and allows you to group multi-file programs into one file. The second reason is to avoid confusion as to what the proper file extension should be on a particular program. Express, as does most 8 bit Atari BBS's, uses the file extension <the three letters following the period in a file's name> for its own purposes. Express does not include an easy way to describe what is in each download directory other than giving the name of the file. With all the files Arced, you are sure of getting the correct file extension when the program is extracted. I am trying to come up with a simple, easily maintainable method for users to get complete file descriptions.

Facts is there for you to use. If you have any questions, requests, or suggestions, leave me a message on the board. Experiment and play with the commands. It is the best way to learn and for most of the GAG members it is just a local phone call away.

IF IT AIN'T BROKE, FIX IT ANYWAY

Having problems with your ST? Flint does have an authorized ST service center. Laverne Petry and his staff at National Computer Clinic on S. Saginaw & Bristol are more than willing to nurse your ailing ST back to health. Armed with the latest revision of the famous ST diagnostic cartridge, replacement chips, service manuals, years of computer service experience, and a tube of Crazy Glue, Laverne claims that he can resurrect even the most terminal ST.

Late last November I thought I had totally fried my motherboard while attempting to install a 1 meg upgrade in the ten minutes I had between dinner and going bowling. I was all set to trot out to Toys R Us to secure a new replacement. National Computer Clinic saved the day. Those who are familiar with my 520 know that I don't even bother to screw the case together or install the RF shield as I'm always pushing down on the chips. I still have that problem but it seems to be fading away somewhat. I do have a functional 1 meg 520 and for that I'm happy.

LaVerne has said that he is interested in getting involved in add ons such as 1 meg upgrades. He will be carrying the blitter chip when it becomes available later in the year and it will probably have to be installed by an authorized service center. This is not a paid political endorsement however I've had no problem with the three or four times I've had

service work done at National Computer Clinic over the past 3 years. Besides, if I hear of any ST owner who is justly unsatisfied with his work I will bring my 520 back in for service. That sort of fate is far worse than death.

8 EIGHT I/ ENOUGH

Librarians column for January

by Jerry Cross

This month, there are 6 new disks added to the catalog. After trading with several other clubs, I am now buried in programs, and it's a pleasure to dig through them looking for treasures.

DISK #158 contains educational programs. FRACTION is a tutorial/game that teaches fractions, TRIVIA is another trivia question game, with a sample data file. Also, HOMEWORK HELPER is another Q/A program, with a QUESTION maker program, and a data file on the reverse side of this disk.

DISK 159 has several disk utility programs. Everything from DOS modification programs to AUTORUN.SYS makers. There are also some revised versions of popular programs, including POLYCOPY. Now you can copy to/from any disk drive (1-8) and sd/ed. HOMEBREW and DISKTOOL are also updated.

DISK 160 is another education disk. Featured is THE DRILL INSTRUCTOR, which is a word guessing game for children. You can create your own word files with QUESTION.

Disk 161 is the XMAS disk that was given out at the 1985 Christmas meeting. I don't know why I waited untill January to put this out (another snafu!). Featured on this disk is the MOVIE MAKER x-mas greatings from Antic.

Speaking of Movie Maker, DISK 162 features the Circus Movie Maker files you may have heard about.

DISK 163 was given to me just before the deadline (thanks MACE). This is a CPR first-aid tutorial on a 2-sided disk that features animated cartoons and text. Adults should check this out first before showing it to kids so they can better answer their questions, and help them along. Everyone should learn CPR, and this is a great starting tool!

Finally, DISK 164 contains several games. MINIGOLF is a putt-putt-golf game that includes a program to design your own course. AMAZEA is a must have game for you maze freaks. Climb is a fast-paced climbing game.

That's it for this month, now on to other things. I seem to have a problem with some of my master disks. If you are experiancing any problems please let me know. I have some disks that have developed bad sectors, and it may have been from my bad Indus drive. Don't get mad, let me know if you have problems!

Taricon II is really rolling. If you have experience in advertising, accounting, or printing/typesetting, and would like to help us out please contact me. We need some advice on our printing and other matters, and can use some help.

Finally, my bbs is growing slowly but surely. Thanks to Gil Merceiz, I now have loads of ST programs available for downloads, and will soon have an index file for my 8-bit programs. It's going to take a while to finish (remember I had over 500 files at one time) but it won't be long now. Please remember to leave a description of any uploads you send me.

That's it, see you at the meeting.

8 EIGHT IS ENOUGH

Help needed from 8-bitters
by Dave Pettit

Ever since I heard about programs to create a mini-newspaper with an 8-bit computer I have been searching for one for my Atari 800. So far I have only found one program for other computers and one from Xlent Software that is apparently hard to use.

The first program is 'The Newsroom' by Springboard Software, Inc. Their program allows the user to enter their own text, choose from several fonts and several graphics, and merge it all together to form a fancy 8 1/2 by 11 newspaper. This copy could be printed several times on your printer or used as a master at a professional printing shop. Nwespapers could be made for your social club, for your church, for school announcements, for classroom writing activities, your families annual newsletter, and more.

Another program by Springboard Software, Inc. is their "Certificate Maker". This program is similar to Printshop but it makes an 8 1/2 by 11 award with border, graphic pictures, and text to the user's specifications. This program, too, could be used by a myriad of people -- probably you, too.

The problem is that Springboard Software, Inc. is "not currently planning on converting these programs to the Atari" according to a represenative of the company. But it came to me that if enough 8-bit Atari owners expressed a real interest in their software, they would be foolish not to make it for the Atari. I believe this is what happened to Broderbund Software and their Printshop program.

Here is what you can do. Write or call Springboard Software, Inc. (7808 Creekridge Circle, Minneapolis, MN 55435, Ph. (612)944-3912) and tell them in your own words that you would like to see both programs converted to the Atari 8-bit computers. Tell them how you plan on using them, giving them the idea that there are more people in the country like you with an Atari.

Your efforts may convince Springboard that there truly is a market for their fine products. If it does, it will provide us all with some terrific and useful software and keep me from buying an Apple clone which I will not use except for this software. I thank you in advance for your help.
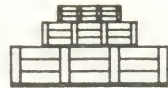
CASCADES ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS

JACKSON AND SOUTH CENTRAL MICHIGAN

C.A.C.E. is the Atari Club in and around the Jackson county area. The main purpose of the club is to help inform new users, and to promote the use of the Atari Computer in the community.

OFFICERS:

President	Harold LaRue	536-4410
Vice-President	Bob Kingsbury	789-6642
Secretary	Joe Cripps	764-0204
Treasurer	Scott Boland	784-9246
Member at Large	Joe Garner	787-1873
Librarian	Bob Kingsbury	789-6642
Editor	Wolfgang Mueller	789-8917
Meeting Coord.	Brent Fisher	764-4599
P-R Chairman	William Locke	782-6873
Membership Coor.	Scott Boland	784-9246

MEMBERSHIP:

The current membership dues are \$10.00 per year, and are payable at any of the C.A.C.E. monthly meetings, or by mail to the P.O.BOX.

Club membership includes access to the entire club software and publication libraries, along with a monthly published newsletter.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Any written communications with C.A.C.E. should be sent to:

> C.A.C.E.
> P.O. BOX 6161
> Jackson, Mich. 49204

MEETINGS:

Our meetings are held on the second Sunday of the month, from 1:00 PM to approx. 4:00 PM.

The meetings take place at the Boos Recreatior Center, Loomis Park, 210 Gilbert St., Jackson Mi.

Presidential address

by Harold LaRue

Well did everyone get a bunch of new ATARI stuff for X-Mas ? How about showing some of it off at the meeting ! Just call us first so we can be ready for it.

I was extremely happy with the turn-out for the Dec. meeting. We certainly raised a lot of money! Let's keep up the support!!!

It seems that ATARI is donating a bunch of promotional stuff to raffle off at the Computer Faire.
Speaking of the Faire...We still need a couple more people to man the displays. If you can spare a couple hours on Feb. 21 & 22 call any of the officers. We need you !!

An ST SIG will soon be popping up and ST programs will be added to the library!!!

Hopefully, the new CACE BBS 'The KEEP' will be running by now. It will include a CACE section and ATARI up and downloading! It is 24hrs-300/1200 baud-and is run by me!!! I'm sure the latter will be the main attraction to the board.
Also, it wil be run on BBS Express!

The # is (517) 536-8239 !!!

Give me a call !!!

Meeting minutes

by Joe Cripps

Hello, everyone. A couple of opening remarks. First I am happy to be the new secretery of CACE. And this is the first time I have done something like this, so hang in there. Onward and upward.

The December meeting was opened by our new President, Harold LaRue. The first item of business was that the CACE article in the newspaper is in error, the date of our meetings incorrect. It was noted that we no longer had a public relations (PR) chairman. Scott Boland asked for a volunteer, Bill Locke gratiously volunteered to be our new PR Chairman. Thanks, Bill.

The meeting then moved on to a discussion of the upcoming Computer Faire we a planning for the third week in February at Westwood Mall. Harold noted that will still need more equipment to be used at the faire and volunteers to help. Commitments for equipment and volunteers were made, but you never know when someone may not be able to make it, so if you are interested please contact Harold. Bob Kingsbury noted that he has been in touch with Atari and they have promotional material available and Scott Boland noted that he has been in touch with local businesses who handle Atari products and stated that Sid Youngs and Wards would be willing to donate some software for a raffle.

Harold announced that we are trying to start two new users SIGS. One for the 8-Bit Machines and one for the ST Machines. Wolfgang Mueller volunteered to assist with the 8-Bit SIG. Do to the low number of new users at the meeting it was proposed that the issue be tabled until the January or February meeting.

The Newsletter Editor noted that input to the next issue is due to him by the twentieth of each month. Articles by our membership are needed.

Harold noted that he will be starting up a new BBS. Membership will be $5.00 annually. He hopes to have it in operation early in 1987.

Scott identified the need for software and hardware demonstrations at the meetings. Contact Brent Fisher to arrange to give a demonstration at the next meeting.

Finally, Scott stated that he investigated obtaining membership identification cards and wanted to know if the membership would be interested in them. The idea was put to a vote and the membership present decided not to obtain membership cards.

Well that's about all for now. Remmember the club is only as good as you make it and only worth what you put into it.

I hope all of you had a Very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

TREASURER'S REPORT

by Scott Boland

Since the last treasury report the club paid out $1.31 for receipt books. We received $90.00 for dues, $12.50 for the fifty/fifty drawing, and $74.00 for copy fees from the public domain library. The grand total of the treasury as of December 18th is $489.37. It looks as though the library is starting to see some real action, thanks to the work of our librarian, Bob Kingsbury.

I would like to welcome Donald and Diana Day as our newest members to the club. I am sure you will find it a rewarding experience.

I would also like to thank Bill Locke for volunteering to take on the job as the public relations chairman for the club. We need more people that are willing to give a little time in order for the club to progress.

That's all for now, hopefully next month I'll have more time to write the article on modifing a Percom disk drive so that it can be configured for drives 1 thru 4.

Coordination Corner

by Brent Fisher

This column is here to thank those members of CACE who donate parts of their systems and to also thank those who gave demonstrations at the last meeting, and to announce demonstrations scheduled to be held at the next meeting.

First off I'd like to thank Joe Cripps for lending his computer and monitor and I'd also like to thank David Farmer for the use of his disk drive. As for demostrations I'd like to thank Tim Sharp for bringing his 520ST and showing ST Star Raiders and Flight Simulator II, along with John Charles for bringing Star Raiders II for the 8-bits. One thing I would like to bring up is that if I've asked you to bring something and you can't show up for the meeting please call me sometime before the meeting to let me know so that I can make other arrangments, you can usually get me after 5:00 weekdays and if you're calling on the Sunday before the meeting you can get me from between about 11:00 and up to about 12:30.

O.K. now for the next meeting: a 1020 printer/plotter demostration of how you can get your MicroIllustrator files to print in four colors, and some small program listings. Also a 520ST demostration of Silent Service. If you have any suggestions or comments on the demos or would like to do some demos yourself call me at 764-4599.

GREATER KALAMAZOO ATARI USERS GROUP

GKAUG

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS
by Dan Youngs

Well another YEAR, another President!!! I enter this job with a little apprehension, not knowing just what is expected of me, but I love a challenge!! So here goes 1987, lets make it a GREAT Year! I have been running ideas through my mind as to our club and ways to make our atari computers more enjoyable and I've got lots of them. I hope you have too, because at the next meeting we will be looking for your input so please bring your ideas!!!

At the last meeting we agreed to use the new Mid Michigan Atari Magazine as our newsletter. I think this is a great move, and it should help keep members even if they don't attend the meetings. Gene VanDeraa will be giving his BASIC class this next meeting, so bring your note pads!! We hopefully will have the Analog disk straightened out, and at least have December's disk there.

Many of you have your membership come do in the first months of the year. PLEASE CHECK and see what your renew dates are.

I will list the new officers of our club:

President
    Dan Youngs 372-3229

Vice President
    Frank Fellheimer 657-6106

Treasurer
    Steve Haddix 349-1646

Secretary
    ???????????????

Librarian
    Steve Buechler

Disk Chief
    Dave Oldenburg

There you have it, the new officers. As you can see we are still in need of a secretary. Please consider the job.
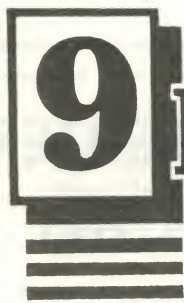
The next meeting will be Saturday January 10, 2:00pm at 103 Dewing, Kalamazoo College.

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*                                                                    *
*                    HAPPY  NEW  YEAR                                 *
*           from  Mid-Michigan  Atari  Magazine                      *
*                                                                    *
*   Here we are at the beginning of a new year, 1987.  In looking back over  *
*   the past six months, we have added at least one club each month.  We now *
*   cover most of the Michigan Atari Users Groups.  This month we wish to bid *
*   welcome to two clubs that are joining us.  They are the Greater Kalamazoo *
*   Atari User Group serving the Kalamazoo Area and the Washtenaw Atari Users *
*   Group serving the Ann Arbor and Washtenaw areas of Michigan.  It is our   *
*   hope that with your support we will continue to grow and expand in the    *
*   future.                                         Rich Barnes               *
*                                                                    *
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TRI-CITY ATARI GROUP

T.A.G. - SAGINAW, BAY CITY, MIDLAND

NEXT MEETING

The Tri-City Atari Users Group meets the second Saturday of every month at 2:00 pm at the Rudy Zauel Memorial Library on the corner of Shattuck and Center in Saginaw. Upcoming meetings are scheduled as follows:

> January 10th at 2:00 pm.
> February 14th at 2:00 pm.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

The club is looking healthier all the time! At the December meeting we signed up 5 new members (all ST'ers!), and had several renewals bringing the club balance up to $221.79. This means that we can start having raffles again! But just because we're looking better, don't get the idea that we can all coast along. I need your ideas and your help. PLEASE...if you want to submit an article for the newsletter, do it!! If you want something covered at our meetings, then speak out! We've already had some good ideas to start the new year out, let's keep it up.

OFFICERS of TAG are as follows:

LeRoy Valley..President. ....(517)686-6796
Marty Schmidt.Treasurer/Sec .(517)792-6029
Al Jennings...8-bit Disk Lib.(517)790-1980
Lance Middleton.......ST Disk Librarian
Ron Hoffman...Assist. ST Disk Librarian

Club dues are $20.00 per year. For this fee you get the Mid- Michigan Atari Magazine, support for both the 8-bits and the ST's, and full access to the club's public domain library. We currently have about 90 disks in the 8-bit library and 30 in the ST library. You can get copies of these disks AT NO CHARGE if you bring your own disk to copy on (time permitting) at the regular meeting. If you don't have a disk with you, you can get the 8-bit disks for $1.00 each and the ST disks for $2.00 each. Non-TAG members can get copies of the 8-bit disks for $2.00 each and the ST disks for $4.00 each. If you need to renew, do it now! If you haven't joined yet, then do it now!

HOT FLASHES FROM THE FUTURE

The January TAG meeting will focus on Databases and Spreadsheets. We will start out the meeting with a brief description of what a database and spreadsheet are and their possible uses. The databases to be demoed include:

> PD Database (8-bit)....Al Jennings
> Synfile (8-bit).......Marty Schmidt
> Zoomracks (ST)........Paul Bork

The spreadsheet that will be demoed will be the GEM version of VIP, a Lotus 123 clone, by LeRoy Valley. This powerful spreadsheet emulates the popular Lotus 123 on the IBM computer and can even read files created on 123 on the IBM!

RAFFLE...

At the January meeting the club will be purchasing two of the Epyx 500XJ joysticks to raffle off. The raffle tickets will be $1.00 each, and the joysticks will be raffled off separately. These new sticks from Epyx are really hot little items. They are custom designed to fit in the palm of your hand and are guaranteed for 5 years or 5 million shots (whichever comes first...I wonder how they count the number of shots?). These sticks work equally well on the 8-bits or the ST, so show up and buy a raffle ticket or two!

The emphasis of the February meeting will be on languages. Look for coverage of Basic XL and Kyan Pascal for the 8-bits and Megamax C and the LDW Basic Compiler for the ST.

****** EXPIRATION NOTICE ******

Remember, once your membership expires you'll only receive three more issues of the Mid-Michigan Atari Magazine! Renew your membership now!

JL JL JL JL JL JL JL JL JL

E B V

8-bit Equipment Volunteers:

      Nelson Greene...Disk Drive
              ...TV set
    Marty Schmidt...Atari 800

ST Equipment Volunteers:

    Frank Serresseque...Monitor
              ...Disk Drive
    Lance Middleton...Keyboard

Once again, a big THANKS to all of you who loan
your equipment to the club.

Meeting minutes

RELICS TO RELISH

The annual Christmas Swap'N'Shop bash was a
great success! Everybody had plenty to sell
(which means that there was plenty to buy!) and
there was even a reasonable amount of ST goodies
available. One table in particular looked like
a small Atari store going out of business sale.
Seems like Marc (who now has an ST) recently
decided to chuck all of his old 8-bit stuff, and
this meant a lot of great buys for the 8-bit
users.

The 1040ST with the Casio CZ-101 was a very
impressive sight. As it began to play all of
the old favorite Christmas songs and display
Christmas pictures, a good sized crowd began to
build around it. The demo being run was called
Alite and was produced by Audio Light, makers of
Music Studio and N-Vision. All of the pictures
were from the N-Vision program and the songs
being played came from (you guessed it) Music
Studio. This disk is available in our public
domain disk library, if you didn't get a copy at
the meeting. Music Studio was also demoed
briefly and many songs were loaded up and played
(Ghostbusters sounded great!). Music Studio
allows you to place music notes on a staff and
then play them through either the monitor
speaker or a synthesizer. Several games which
utilized the midi port were loaded up and
displayed. ST Karate and ST Protector (both by
Paradox software) sounded much better through
the synthesizer than through the speaker.

Al Jennings indicated that he could not handle
the ST portion of our PD library, as he had no
way of checkig the contents of the disks, or of
making copies for anyone. Asking for volunteers
to assume the position of ST disk librarian, we
got an enthusiastic response! We will have two
ST disk librarians. Lance Middleton will be the
ST disk librarian and Ron Hoffman will be the
Assistant ST disk librarian. Ron comes from

CACE (Cascade Atari Computer Enthusiasts) and
has all of the PD software from the CACE
library. These two will generate a complete
listing of the available PD software (about 30
single sided disks) and (hopefully) will supply
me with a column regularly to update us as to
what is being added. Congratulations Lance and
Ron!

ST

ST NOTES
by LeRoy Valley

OK class, how many of you are still looking for
a good word processor? Please click your keys
in response to the question. WOW, the clicking
in here is deafening! Seriously, I have been
waiting for a year now to see a GOOD word
processor, and one has finally arrived -- but I
have yet to see it advertised anywhere!

I'm talking about HabaWriter II by Haba Systems.
I was one of the ones who originally purchased
HabaWriter and got burned with a program full of
bugs and not a lot of features.

Several months after sending in my warranty card
I got a letter in the mail stating that if I
sent in $10.00 and my original HabaWriter disk,
I could get HabaWriter II. This same letter
included a whole list of promises (sometimes
called features) of the added enhancements in HW
II. I thought, what the heck, the original
program I had was worthless to me, and what was
another 10 bucks?

Five months went by and I thought that Haba had
either lost my check or gone out of business
(No, that rumour is NOT true!) when lo and
behold, HW II arrived! First, let me tell you
what it does not have. It does not have a built
in spelling checker. That's it in the "does not
have" department. As a pure word processor,
however, it's the best I've seen yet. The
following word processors are ones which I
either own or have seen in action:

        TextPro, by Abacus
        First Word, by GST
        ST Writer, by Atari
        ST WordWriter, by Timeworks
        Regent Word, by Regent

HW II tops all of them in simplicity of use and
convenience of features. I have yet to find a
bug in the program. First, lets cover some of
the standard features that HW II has:

    * Supports both their formatted file and
ASCII files.
    * Supports full GEM mouse selection and
movement of text.
    * Offers Cut and Paste - even between
documents.

* Offers Search and Replace functions.
* Is a What You See Is What You Get WP.
* Shows Italics, Super and Subscripts, Light and Bold text, and underlining on screen.
* Has a very flexible printer formatter that can be configured for any printer on the market.
* Supports headers and footers.

Well, that was a list of the standard options found on most decent GEM based WP, and all of them function properly in HW II. Now lets get on to the good stuff that other word processors don't offer.

FOOTNOTES!!! Yes, this is the first word processor that I've found that actually implements footnotes properly. Just select Footnote from the drop down menu and a superscript 1 will pop into your document at the cursor location. A new window is opened and you just type in your footnote as you want it to appear in the document. When you select Footnote the second time HW II places a superscript 2 in your document, etc. Since the footnote is formatted separately from the rest of the document, you can double space your document and single space your footnote. Or you can indent the footnote, or...well, you get the idea, footnotes work great! You tell HW II how many lines to use for footnotes, and if you exceed the total number on any one page, the rest of your footnote is carried over to the next page.

FORMAT ... I know, you're thinking that other word processors have format commands too right? Wrong. How many of them actually work on an entire document...even if the document isn't originally from that word processor? None that I know of, they all seem to have bugs. HW II works flawlessly. Want to justify all of your text Left? How about Right? Or Centered? And then there's Flush (which uses microspacing). The entire document gets formatted in your new style immediately. Don't want to format the entire document? Then don't, just do a paragraph, or a sentence. HW II handles all of these situations easily!

GLOSSARY ... This is one of the slickest features found in HW II. You can create your own glossaries and store common phrases, large words, or EVEN PRINTER CONTROL CODES. With one simple command these items can be selected and dropped into your document. Control codes on HW II show up as a small "control indicator" in your document — but only if you ask for them. Control T toggles the display of control indicators on and off. After creating custom printer commands (for such things as Elite NLQ double struck text), just store the symbol in the Glossary and stick a description next to it. The next time you want to use this code, select Glossary Get and select Elite NLQ and the

control codes will be placed in your document!! With this feature, you can wring every last available command out of that printer of yours! You can create more than one Glossary file. PAGINATION ... HW II now supports Automatic and Manual Pagination. When you (or HW II) sets a page break it shows up visually on the screen as a dashed line. Nice feature.

BACKGROUND PRINTING ... HW II allows you to print a document while you're working on the word processor. The printing is considerably slower, but it's a nice feature nonetheless. PRINT FILTERS ... HW II supports special characters, such as those found on the box in 1st Word. The print filter can be created for any printer, allowing you print special characters.

KEYBOARD ... Want to reconfigure your keyboard so that an Alternate A generates an Atari Fuji symbol? You can do it with the keyboard modifier program that Haba supplies you with. You can assign any key to any character in the Atari character set, then save the keyboard configuration.

HW II also supports multiple line spacing, automatic page numbering, and date insertion. This is the word processor to buy! It works, and it works well. I'm writing my newsletter on HW II, and having a good time doing it! HW II is unprotected, so it runs great on a hard drive. The only feature that I'de like to see is the ability to save a configuration file to store the default file paths.

Well everybody, see ya next month!

"The program is a breeze. Just watch your spelling."

WASHTENAW ATARI USERS' GROUP

NEXT WAUG MEETING: JANUARY 13 AT WINES SCHOOL

REPORT ON GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 12/9/86

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 pm by
Mike Pieronek. Mike announced that he was
pleased to see Atari ST advertising in
Newsweek. Mike introduced Barb Franczyk,
M.A.C.E. Convention Manager, and Jerry Cross of
the Genessee Atari Group. Barb and Jerry led a
discussion of the upcoming 'Taricon II' Atari
Festival that is being sponsored jointly by
M.A.C.E. and Atari.

Barb noted that Jack Tramiel has recognized the
importance of supporting the Atari user groups.
However she feels that Atari is still
understaffed and needs to improve it's ability
to make and keep promises. She feels that the
volunteer group is working out very well and
asked for help with publicity.

Doug Feldman announced to the membership that
he had been approached by CHAOS in Lansing to
see if there was any interest in joining the
Mid Michigan Atari Magazine. This multi-group
newsletter is only slightly more expensive than
the printed newsletter we are currently
producing and would give our members first-hand
information about what other Michigan user
groups are doing. It was agreed that we would
join on a trial basis to see if these
newsletters would be received BEFORE our
regular monthly meetings.

Mike Olin demonstrated Microsoft Basic II. He
noted that his original purchase of MS Basic
was in 1983 when the disk-based version sold
for $69. The current version is sold in
cartridge form with an extension disk that
contains features used in programming but are
not critical for running programs. It now
sells for $39 and less. It is extremely
similar to the language built into the
Commodore computers and Level II Basic for the
Tandy computers. Documentation includes tips
on how to 'port' programs from these other
languages and from Atari Basic. This BASIC
language leaves only 20644 bytes available for
programming. Mike noted that there is little
to no software support for this language and
does not recommend purchase except for the
above-noted similarities to other computers.

Mike also demonstrated Basic XL by OSS which
leaves 33525 available bytes. It is extremely
compatible with Atari Basic and runs
approximately 3-4 times faster. (It runs the

Eratosthenes Sieve benchmark in 2 minutes and
41 seconds as compared to over 5 minutes for
Atari Basic.) Mike noted the 'SET' command
that allows optional alteration of a variety of
standard parameters, e.g. changing the prompt
character used in an INPUT statement or
allowing keyword entry in lower-case. He also
noted several DOS-type commands from Basic.

Craig Harvey demonstrated Kyan Pascal which
seemed to take a long time to compile but ran
at near M.L. speed. Craig shared Mike's
opinion of MS Basic, that this language also
enjoys little support on the Atari's.

Mike Pieronek then demonstrated ACTION! by OSS.
This language 'stole the show' with it's speed
and terrific editing features. (ACTION ran the
Sieve in less than 2 seconds.) Mike said it is
a difficult language to learn as he had been
toying with it for over two weeks and felt that
he had only scratched the surface of learning
it. He showed the ability to edit two programs
simultaneously (using upper and lower windows)
and moving program lines between windows quite
readily. He also indicated that this language
was worth the purchase price if for nothing
more than to use the editor as a word
processor.

The meeting was then adjourned and the library
was opened for disk sales and the ST Sig ran
various demonstrations of adventure games.
Recording Secretary, Mike Olin

WAUG DISK LIBRARY NEWS

At the January 13, 1987 meeting we will discuss
a new venture for WAUG, the start of the Atari
ST Disk Library. All WAUG ST planning is being
supervised by Craig Harvey. He has suggested
that ST disks be priced at $5.00 each for
members only. We are actively seeking public
domain programs for the ST. You may contact
Craig with by calling his BBS (761-2444) or
bring disk to the next meeting and Craig will
swap with you. We hope that this new feature
of WAUG will encourage Atari ST owners to
participate in our user's group as we begin our
new full-support ST activities.

The Atari 8-bit disk library will also be
improved with the addition of Harry Price as
Assistant Librarian. Harry has submitted
several 'theme' disks that we will introduce at
the next few meetings. At the January meeting,
we will also demo the 8-bit Database disk
submitted by Doug Feldman.

ST CORNER by Craig Harvey

This is being composed a little quicker than
I'd planned in order to get it into this new
mag we're trying out. Therefore it may not
cover as much as usual, but the rest of the mag
will probably make up for it.

For the January WAUG meeting the ST will get
more time in the regular meeting, rather than
the 30 minutes after the regular meeting.
Therefore, we can do some more extensive demos
and have more time for questions/answers. So
what sort of demos will there be?

Here are some things we can cover in upcoming
meetings:
* Programming languages *
* Databases *
* Games *
* ST Telecommunications Programs *
* Word Processors *
* Painting/drawing Programs *

These are not in any particular order. For the
January meeting we will cover some programming
languages simply because I know there are a
number of them owned by myself and other
members who could demo them. So if you have
any ST language packages other than Modula-2 (I
get to demo that one) be prepared for me to
give you a call and ask you to show how it
works.

If the mail order companies don't slow down too
much over the holidays, I will also be able to
show the MT C-shell multi-tasking, multi-user
system from Beckemeyer Development Tools.

By the way, if you've been holding off from
coming to WAUG meetings due to the lack of
enough ST support, the time has come to do
something about it. WAUG is ready to set up a
disk library ($5/disk for members), allow more
time for the ST at meetings, and provide more
ST coverage in the newsletter. To make this a
reality, we need ST members. So show up and
bring friends who haven't discovered WAUG yet.

May the holidays bring you all the software
you've been waiting for...

DATABASES ON THE 8-BIT ATARI by Doug Feldman

Ideally, a Database program on your computer
should be flexible enough to handle many
different types of information and allow
creation of unique print-outs to suit the
specific application. My first exposure to

Databases was the 7-part BASIC program
published in the old Softside Magazine (Sept.
1980 to March 1981). Mark Pelczarski discussed
many of the most desirable features and
included listings for the Atari computer. The
main problem with the program was that it was
very long and did not leave much memory space
for the RAM based filing system. Furthermore,
the program executed very slowly and crashed
alot when it did work.

Since that time, many commercial Database
programs have been available. These include:
DataPerfect, Atari Mailing List (on cassette!),
Atari Home Filing Manager and HomeFind.
Recently, Analog Magazine published The Analog
Database (Oct. 1986).

Over the last several years, I have worked on
creating my own Database system. I wanted it to
be versatile enough to handle various
applications and execute fast enough to
overcome the inherent slow operation of Atari
BASIC. My persistent collection of most issues
of COMPUTE and ANTIC magazine provided me with
several machine language subroutines that all
operate on one of Atari BASIC's unique
features: unlimited string length. (Actually, I
found that the maximum allowed string length is
32,000 bytes!)

As development of this program progressed, I
discovered that one of the most critical
aspects of a good Database program was the
print-out format for individual records. A
single generic print-out did not really suit
all possible applications. Instead of
attempting to create a 'programmable' print-out
feature, I decided to utilize a modular
approach to the program. Thus, the user can
design the desired print-out format in a short
BASIC subroutine. This subroutine is then
merged into the 'generic' Database program.
This creates a 'dedicated' Database program for
each print-out requirement. In my way of
thinking, this is a great convenience.

I have decided to enter this program into the
WAUG Disk Library. It includes several
different Database files taken out of the World
Atlas. Also, I have been using a 'dedicated'
version of the Database to store the WAUG
membership lists and to print-out the
newsletter mailing labels. I will present a
short demo of the whole system at the Jan. 13
WAUG meeting.

WASHTENAW ATARI USERS' GROUP

LIST OF FUTURE WAUG ACTIVITIES:

JAN 13 --- ST DEMONSTRATIONS & 8 BIT DATABASES
FEB 10 --- TELECOMMUNICATIONS & MEET THE SYSOP!
MAR 10 --- WORD PROCESSORS & FOOD PROCESSORS
APR 14 --- ARCADE GAMES & PAC MAN MARATHON
MAY 12 --- LOCAL ATARI SOFTWARE & AUTHORS
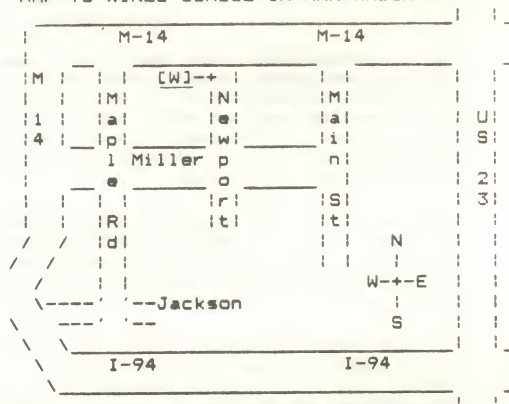JUN 9 --- FLEA MARKET & OFFICER SELECTIONS

HOW TO JOIN WAUG

Come to a meeting. WAUG memberships are $10.00
for 10 meetings. Renewals are $5.00. WAUG
members receive a mailed copy of our newsletter
each month and are able to buy disks for $2.00
from our 8-Bit disk library ($5.00 for our new
ST library).


HOW TO CONTACT WAUG !!!

WAUG EXPRESS BBS: 313-662-3689 (300 Baud)
CLEAR THINKING BBS: 313-761-2444 (1200/300)
MOLIN'S DEN BBS: 313-420-0407 (1200/300)
By Mail: 4 Hermina Ct. Ann Arbor. MI 48103

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     Wines Elementary School is located on
Newport Road, just South-West of the M-14
overpass and 50 feet North of the intersection
of Newport and Sunset. There is no exit from
M-14 at Newport Rd. and no exit from West-bound
I-94 to North-bound M-14. From I-94, you can
exit at Jackson Ave, go East to Maple and take
Maple to Miller. The meetings are held in the
spacious teacher's lounge, with a 25 inch color
monitor and a handy soda-pop vending machine.
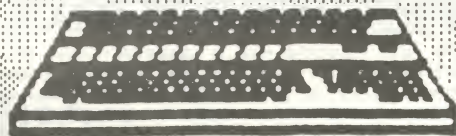
BiTS AND PiECES

FROM THE

Barrle Creek Atari User Group

Presidential address

The Chairmans Letter   Thomas Siemietkowski

Trying to get this letter in perspective is hard because I am writing it before our next meeting so that it will be ready for the January meeting.

The last meeting was a disaster; only one regular member and two new members showed. People, this is your group, and without your active participation there is no group. Monthly, I hear complaints and concerns about where we are going or what we are to be doing. Well, it is hard to go anywhere or do anything without people for input or participation. Membership is slowly dissipating, except for the old diehards and a few new members. I have asked you all about trying to recruit new people, but the efforts have all been nil except for myself and one other member. If you have problems attending meetings at this time for any reason, we can maybe change the meeting time or maybe even meet bi-monthly. Please vent your concerns with me or any other member of the executive board. The group we have are very compatible with needs and capabilities of each other and we have a lot of fun with each other and with our computers.   We have to stay together to continue to progress and grow but we have to be together to get this accomplished. I am personnally ready for your phone calls at any time in the evening.

Our January meeting is also our officers election meeting so it is of great importance that you attend.

I would like to take this time to thank all my fellow officers of the past year for their time and their work to keep this group alive and productive. As I have said before this is a small group but we are diversified and the input and work I have received from them has been of great value.

The January meeting will be held again at my house on Thursday the 15th.

VIEWPOINT

I hope you will enjoy our new FLAG.(FLAG - is a Newspaper word for the name at the top of the front page. In our case at the beginning of our Newsletter, in the middle of MIDI Magazine).

Support for Mid-Michigan Atari Magazine came in from all of BCAUG's officers and membership, three of whom (Tom Siemietkowski, Chuck Steele, and Todd Harris), meet at least once a month extra just to set the lay out and send it off to CHAOS.

This article is being typed on Dec. 2, and won't be read by Atari owners until January 1987.(That's a whole year after I wrote it, sigh !!).

The January meeting will be the most important night of the coming year. BCAUG's will ask for volunteers to hold office for the coming year. Officer duties are not easy, or always fun ones. But to have a great meeting, and a good group at the same time it is necessary, to have strong Leadership and Direction !!

At this time a year ago the group moved away from the set forum, almost costing the club to fall apart in a single year. With this next meeting, I feel we can regain the club's upward momentum and achieve on the goals that it has set.

All we need is, what we already have-- You !!

Please come to the January meeting, Thursday the 15th.

Todd Harris
a BCAUG's member

Disk Library

by Chuck Steele

1 hope everyone is enjoying the December Disk of the Month. I want to thank Joe and Todd for their help in getting programs for the Disk.

This months disk will feature TAX HELPER 1986. This is an update of last years TAX HELPER. We will be giving out a new library listing with all the new and updated disks in the library.

As of this writing I'm still having some hardware problems which may effect the January Disk of the Month. Hope every thing is fixed and put back together by then.

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BCAUG OFFICERS

CHAIRMAN:
MEMBERSHIP:
   Thomas Siemietkowski   963-4475
LIBRARIAN:
SECRETARY:
   Chuck Steele   964-1701
TREASURER:
   Josephine Yeager   968-8401
NEWSLETTER:
   Editor-Todd Harris   781-5963
   Production-Dan Egan   962-2549
BBS/SYSOP
   Richie Frye   965-0480

Review

Todd Harris BCAUG's Member

MERCENARY: A Flight Simulator Adventure

Ahoy Buckaroo, grab on tight as your going on an adventure. Ya see's you've just blasted off into a whole new world, a world of sound and mind. A world called Targ, and you control your own destiny.

Your name is the Mercenary.

As you may or may not know, the software market is a pretty dead place for an Atari user. I've spent a few hours drooling over the Commodore shelves. (about 50 to 65 percent of the inventory). Some of the smarter (because I own an Atari, not a Comme') software programs come Commodore/Atari !!!

Mercenary was found in the Comme' section at Toys'R'us [Battle Creek] store. But don't be misled, the Atari side includes both a 48K version and a 64K. The difference is in graphics. 64K game uses graphics mode 15, the 48K uses Gr. 7.

The game is played out using 3-D images, like the STAR WARS Arcade game, or Solid States. (A 3-D drawing, plotting program from Analog) This allows the over all scope of Mercenary to be BIG.

In a nut's shell it's a ...Flight Simulator-Text Adventure-without the Text-3D Plotter ..game. If you get too bored just shoot down one of the worlds site seeing wonders, or steal a ship. The maps are a must and the nice Atari Fuji sign was a great surprise. Datasoft, I think it's a good game, keep it up.

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Atari Technical

LOVE AT FIRST BYTE
by Matt Howe (G.A.G.)

Welcome to this month's article on advanced BASIC programming. This month I am going to deviate from our normal programming routine and talk about some of the various versions of BASIC available for the 8-bit atari computer line. But first I want to put in a plug for my BBS, Love At First Byte (what else). It is up 24 hours and runs 300 or 1200 baud. There are not a lot of down loads but there are some interesting databases and I would like to see some programmers fill up the message bases with interesting and detailed explanations of the intricacies of the ATARI computer.

First let's talk about the old standby, ATARI BASIC, developed when the machine was first brought out. It was a compromise between what they wanted and what they could fit into the 8K cartridge. I think the three things I miss most are formatted prints and inputs and player/missle graphics support. Some of the other things that would have been nice would be a auto renumber, block line erasing, DOS commands and true data I/O of numbers. Trace is also a handy feature for trouble shooting. After all that, the only thing more you could ask for is string arrays.

Well, let us look at the other versions of BASIC that I have had a chance to look at.

First we will look at an old favorite, BASIC XL/XE. The original BASIC XL, I have been told, was a re-write of the original version of the ATARI BASIC. Maybe, maybe not. But one thing is sure most of the features missing from ATARI BASIC are in BASIC XL. Thanks to the development of bank switching it still fits into 8K. Bank switching is the process by which one set of memory chips are switched out and another set are switched in. This allows the use of more memory without taking up more room.

Some of the features of BASIC XL are the missing print and input formatting and a really fine player/missle graphics interface. It supports the setup of P/M graphics including both player and missle shapes. It also contains routines for vertical movement including a command to read the joystick directly into the player or missle movement routine. In BASIC XL we also find our missing string arrays and an entire set of program development aids. Renumber, auto line numbering, real text error descriptions, block line erasing and my favorite, a trace function. Some of the other commands are byte and word (two bytes, 16-bits) handling and block memory moves. We will also find all of the DOS commands and a whole slew of new functions. These are the obvious things, but we also find a group of commands for handling decision making beyond the IF-THEN of ATARI BASIC. Besides the OR and AND we will find EOR (exclusive OR). We also find IF-THEN-ELSE situations and WHILE and ENDIF. These extra logic commands are great helps in speeding up the decision making process, a major reason programs are slow, which brings us to another feature of BASIC XL: the FAST command.

All these versions of BASIC are "interpreted BASIC" meaning that the computer interprets the program one line at a time into machine language and then executes that line, after which it goes and gets the next line to interpret. Each time it must GOTO a line the computer searches the line numbers until it finds the line it needs. (A hint here, if you have a routine that will be used a lot put it in the low line numbers the computer can find it faster.) The FAST command from BASIC XL precompiles the line numbers of the program to make them easier to find so it will run 2-3 times faster, regardless of where they are in the actual program text. I have not used BASIC XE, but it will harness the extra 64K of a 130 XE to allow MUCH larger programs than are possible in any other BASIC. Also, a whole new set of commands like SORTUP and SORTDOWN, new math routines, and more everything make BASIC XE uniquely powerful. BASIC XL and BASIC XE are available from OSS Precision Software. I

have seen prices from 50-90 dollars for this product and it is in cartridge form.

The other version of BASIC I have had the pleasure to use is Turbo-BASIC. Turbo-BASIC is a public domain disk from Holland. There is an excellent English translation from the Western New York ATARI User Group now in circulation. It is the end result of work by Dave and Laura Yearke. I have not had a lot of time to experiment with Turbo-BASIC as I have only had a copy for a week but so far I am REAL impressed, particularly for the price. Turbo-BASIC is a disk based product and unfortunatly for some will only work on XL and XE ATARIs, as it uses the space behind the built in BASIC cartridge. Although Turbo-BASIC does not have the formatted and PRINT I would have liked to see, it more than makes up for that in the graphic commands it has. AND IT IS FAST!!! Without a FAST command or anything like it, it is nearly as fast as BASIC XE running full tilt, and is more compatible with programs written in "normal ATARI basic" than the OSS products. It also contains a command called PROC (let your imagination run wild!). We also find the extra decision making commands from BASIC XL, plus renumber, trace and block line deletes. We have the byte and word commands and the missing true number disk I/O. There are no P/M graphic handling, but let's return to my favorite aspect, the graphic commands. CIRCLE, yes it will draw circles with a single command. FILLTO replaces the old unruly XIO command. But I think my favorite is PAINT. PAINT will fill any object of any shape. The TEXT command inserts text directly onto a hi-res graphics screen!

This is just an overview of the major commands added to ATARI BASIC and does not include all the functions or the minor improvements and variations.

To wrap all this up, I recommend getting a copy of Turbo-BASIC, and if you want to do a lot of work in P/M graphics, get a copy of BASIC XL or BASIC XE. Both of these are invaluable to the BASIC programmer.

There is one feature I have not mentioned about Turbo-BASIC — it comes with a compiler. I am not going to talk about the compiler this month since we will compare some compilers in this column next month. If any of you programmers out there have experience with another version of BASIC leave me a message on my BBS and I will include it in next month's recap. Till then,

KEEP WITH THE PROGRAM

⅃⅄ Atari News

The Pittsburg Atari Fair
by Jerry Cross (GAG)
contributing authors Norm Browne,
Mike Lechkun, Mike Clayton (MAGIC)

On November 22 and 23, the Pittsburg Atari Computer Enthusiest (PACE) held one of a series of Atari Fairs. These conventions are put on with the help of Atari, and are planned for several other cities (including Detroit) in the near future. As member's of the Taricon II (Detroit) committee, Mike Letchkun and myself attend this show.

Some of the dealers attending this show included Atari, Black Patch, Quantum Systems, Analog Magazine, Atari Explorer, Disk Publication (New Alladin), Michtron, Xlent software, Abacus software, Zobian Controls, Timeworks Software, Hybrid Arts, Shelbourne Software, Best Electronics, and several local Pittsburg merchants. Also included were several area Atari computer clubs, including GAG (Flint, MI) and MAGIC (Detroit, MI).

Atari had the spotlight of the show, although they showed nothing really new. The Atari booth consisted of 7 XEs and 7 STs which were running a variety of programs. Two STs side by side ran the flying bird demo, one equipped with a blitter chip and one without. One ST was running on a color monitor with a built-in 3.5 single side floppy (that's one half of the rumored STI, the integrated system ST with a detached keyboard!). The 80 column card was running on an amber screen NEC monitor. There were 8 bits running Star Raiders and Planetarium and Atari Writer. There was a word processor displayed on an ST and a game called Phantasia which had incredible sound comparable to sound from a radio or tape player.

Sandy Austin, Neil Harris, Mark Jansen and Jerry Gee manned the Atari booth. It seemed to me that they were generally unavailable to be questioned. Also, there were a lot of people that wanted to complain to them, including one irate person who had come equipped with a permit from the city to picket the show. It seems the fellow was disatisfied with service he had received from Atari and plans to picket all shows east of the Mississippi.

Almost as soon as we arrived at the show, Neil Harris of Atari customer relations spoke about Atari's plans for the year to come and fielded questions from the audience. Neil started out with the now customary assurance that Atari is not abandoning the 8 bit line but is developing new products for it. No satisfactory answers were given as to when these would be available or why it has taken so long for some products.

Neil also stated that the 3.5 inch floppy for the 8 bit is ready to go but no introduction date has been set. Generally all of his comments were optomistic but vague, especially regarding timing of new releases.

RUMORS AND WISHWARE

At the Saturday evening hospitality get-together back at the hotel there was mentioned the possibility of Atari's announcing a 520F which would have its self contained floppy like a 1040 does only single sided. It was also rumored (by an unnamed source ah-la Washington D.C.) that Atari had dumped most of its old 520s and single sided drives to Toys 'R Us and that they would likely be sold at $269.95 for CPU and disk drive. Both of these were denied Sunday when directed to Mark Jansen of Atari technical support. But then, he generally denied and disclaimed everything. Another rumor going around was that the SC3000 monitor would not be distributed, but Sandy Austin said that it would be sold. That's the one with the built-in drive.

WHAT'S NEW?!?

Quantum Systems had 5 new ST programs including a BBS, a terminal, a print utility, a MYDOS shell, and a cartridge containing 16 desk accessories and a battery powered realtime clock. ($99 retail-$79 at the show) This looks like a real winner!

XLENT software had a new 8 bit word processor which seemed to have just about the same features as Atariwriter except that it could use graphics and had a unique 80 column print preview. When activate, you see a "printhead" printing out your letter. The text is very hard to read, but it gives you an idea of what it will look like in a formated way. This program is not compatable with any of the 80 column cards currently available.

Disk Publications announced that in addition to their continuing to publish their 8 bit New Alladin, they will release an ST version of the magazine in December. It will be a two disk set.

Analog magazine announced that their February issue will be their 13th monthly issue and will be an all 8 bit issue!!! Just like the good old days.

David Ahl, formally of Creative Computing, assured his audience that the new Atari Explorer would be published on schedule. He referred to an interesting survey they took which showed that 60% of their audience had STs while 70% had 8 bits, and 40% had both. Explorers coverage will be approximately 50-50. Our own Mike Clayton subscribed and paid cash without getting a receipt. Now that's confidence!

Zobian software demonstrated and explained their
analog and digital rats. Their first rat
announced nearly a year ago was analog and
functioned just like two paddle controllers.
The new digital rat it much faster, smoother and
has greater resolution capability. It is being
sold with RAOS, a new disk operating environment
which is supposed to emulate GEM. It was not
finished but did not look bad. A graphics 8
drawing program was being packaged with it and
the mouse was quick and accurate and a pleasure
to use to draw with. RAOS was $49.95 by itself,
$99.95 with the digital rat, and the rat and
drawing program were $69.95. RAOS occupied 3K
of memory and is relocatable and the menu loads
from disk and works just like DUP.SYS and is the
same size. We had mixed feelings about this
product. I liked the looks of the program and
hardware, but we felt it was overpriced. If you
have a need for a mouse though, this is for you.

MycroFlyte displayed special flight simulator
joysticks($59.95), a bit pricey but a must for a
true flight simulator fanatic. This joystick
has several independant buttons and controls.
Instead of going to the keyboard to enter
commands, all controlls are now conviently on
the joystick. There are 2 versions, one for
8-bit and a deluxe version for the ST.

Timeworks displayed and integrated set of
business programs for the ST including a Word
Processor, a Database Manager, a spreadsheet and
an Accounting program. An unusual feature of
these is that the database includes presentation
graphics much the same as Lotus or VIP which are
spreadsheets. Prices are list $79.95 but
representative said they can usually be found
for $49.95.

Abacus software had books on any topic
pertaining to the ST that you could imagine as
well as a Database manager and a word processor.
They also announced 3 new products coming out
soon. One is a new book "ST For Beginners". I
can't wait for that one.

Alpha systems had two new items. Graphics
transformer makes Printshop icons out of Koala
Pad, Touch Tablet, tereyes, Printshop,
Magniprint II, Graphics Master, StripPoker,
Atari Graphic light pen, and others. Compatible
with all and switches back and forth from one to
another. Also demonstrated was color
computereyes! Very impressive! Degas and
Neochrome compatible but expensive at $199.95.

There were lots of new items for both ST and 8
bit lines. We were disappointed that ICD and
OSS were not in attendance especially as ICD
seems to have perhaps the most innovative
products out right now for the 8 bit line. ICDs
MIO box was demonstrated at the GAG-MAGIC booth
and it is a remarkable device. (Your'e welcome,
ICD! Wish you were here!)

All of us found the show extremely enjoyable and
feel that PACE did a great job of organization
and showed the way to put on a successful show.
We can only hope and work toward the show in our
area being as good.

I also got a lot of new ideas that we will add
to the Taricon show in Detroit. This show is
scheduled for late August of 1987, and will be
held at the Southfield Civic Center. We also
plan to attend shows in Buffalo and Chicago. If
you wish to attend or want more information,
give me a call. Stop by our booth and say hi!

Reviews

PANASONIC KX-P1080i PRINTER REVIEW
by Marty Schmidt

The PANASONIC KX-P1080i is an Epson compatible
printer featuring near letter quality and IBM
compatibility. It is identical with the
KX-P1080 except for the addition of IBM graphics
modes and 120 characters/second speed rather
than 100. The programs I have which use the
graphics mode all work properly in Epson mode.
Strangely, Print Shop works using the Epson mode
but not Panasonic's own 1090-1091. I haven't
timed the printer, but it is about as fast as
the Prowriter I used to have. I believe it had
the 120 CPS rating.

It prints bidirectionally with full logic seek,
that is it speeds to the first word on a line.
This printer is also much quieter than the
Prowriter.

The big news, however, is near letter quality.
This is the main reason I replaced my Prowriter.
Most of the new generation dot matrix printers
have a near letter quality mode, but this
Panasonic will print near letter quality in any
of it's print pitches, (10,12 15 or 17 CPI),
including proportional and italics. You may
also print any pitch double wide and still get
near letter quality. The near letter quality is
generated in two passes of the print head, just
like most other printers. The quality is very
good. I compared it with Panasonic's 1092,
which is a more expensive, faster printer which
lacks the versatility of the 1080i. The 1092
print is superior, with a finer formed
character. However, the difference is not
readily apparent unless you compare the two side
by side. Taken on it's own the 1080i near
letter quality print is very good.

The 1080i will right justify text by itself,
without help from a word processor. It does
this by making the spaces between words even,
not by adding whole spaces, but by adding one

dot width or more as required. This even works
when printing in proportional mode. I know of
no other printer having this ability.
I have seen many printers in use with their top
covers removed. People leave them off because
the covers are not convenient to use. The top
cover on my 1080i is easy to remove and replace,
once I trimmed off the four small raised areas
on the sides. It now stays on except when I'm
installing paper or labels.

The tractor feed, included as standard
equipment, is located after the print head, so
you lose one sheet of paper when starting at the
top of form. The Prowriter had it's tractor
before the print head, but I had to use 20 lb.
paper or risk paper jamming. All things
considered, I prefer the way the Panasonic is
designed. It's friction feed is excellent, and
I have found that I can use friction feed until
the paper gets to the tractors, then engage the
holes and switch to tractor feed. It sounds
like a lot more trouble than it really is. If I
weren't so cheap I'd just waste the one sheet
and forget about it.

Cartridge ribbons are used in the 1080i. They
are small, but I've only had the printer for a
month, so I have no idea how long they last.
There is a hole on the back that you push in
when the print starts to get light. This is
supposed to give about another 50 per cent of
life to the ribbon.

Unlike the older Gemini printers, you may turn
the platen knob forward or backward with the
power switched on. I always regarded that a
hassle on the Gemini printers.

Included on the top is a switch to put the
printer in standard, near letter quality, or
compressed mode. You can print your document in
draft mode, which is faster and easier on the
ribbon, then proofread it and print the final
version in near letter quality mode without
having to enter printer codes into the text.
Very handy.

The documentation supplied with the Panasonic is
very good. Gemini documentation has always been
one of the best, and I think the 1080i manual
compares well with the Gemini manuals. It isn't
as thick as the Gemini's, but everything is
covered in detail.

After reading this review over, I realized there
aren't enough negative comments about the
Panasonic 1080i. I can't come up with anything
to criticize. Not even the price. I bought it
mail order for $199.00 plus shipping.

This printer has my highest endorsement. It is
hard to beat at any price, and it's $199.00
price qualifies it as a steal. If you're
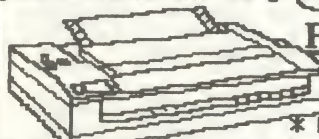looking for a printer, buy this one. You won't
be sorry.

Review

REVIEW: MIO Board by ICD
by Jerry Cross   (GAG)

Several months ago, I had the chance to attend the Summer Consumer Electronics Show. I happened to get there early, and had planned to scan the products in the computer area before going on to other more important displays like the X-rated video section next door.

Not much was happening at the time, and I stumbled across a small booth inside of the huge ATARI area with a guy from ICD standing there. Sitting on his cramped table was a small box connected to an Atari XE. The ICD man said it was their new product, a combination of all the things us Atari folks have been looking for. It was called the MIO (Multi-Input/Output) board.

To many of you, the MIO may be old news... despite the fact that they have only in the last month or so been actually available. Nevertheless, To bring the few of you up to speed: the MIO is one incredable package-

It has an RS-232 port for your modems or other serial perifials, and uses the same set-up as the P:R: Connection, only a bit improved. Also included is a printer port, and a plug for an as yet unavailable 80-column board.

It also has a hard drive interface that works with any SCSI/SASI protocal hard drive. The hard drive must have it's own controller card for it to work. According to Supra, their hard drive should work just fine.

The MIO also has a built-in ramdisk. There are two sizes, 256k or 1Meg. The entire ramdisk area is configurable- you can divide it up into several different size drives from 32k to 960k, or just make one large ramdisk. The software even allows you to configure the MIO to boot right from the ramdisk instead of a floppy.

You can configure a print spooler (a buffer to collect your printing data and release your computer to do other things while it prints) to whatever size you want (up to 256k).

The MIO plugs into your computer using the parallel plug located in the back. This allows for super fast disk access and still allows you to hook up other drives too. If you are using an XE computer, you must purchase an adapter (about $20) since the XE uses the cartridge port as part of its expansion port.

Well, I was sold even at the CES! I eventually tore myself away from the ICD display to check out the video section, but a few months later, I finally got my 1-meg MIO board and ran it through the tests. The first thing I noticed was the excellent documentation that comes with it. If you are new to computers, this takes you through all you need to know with few headaches. More experienced users will not even need to look at the docs. The built in software is menu driven and very user friendly.

The software resides on an EPROM inside the MIO. So what? Well, ICD had taken some of it's past experiences into consideration and has set up a plan to exchange future software modifications for only a token fee. The EPROM can be easily removed and replaced. Simply send ICD $15 and they will send you the new EPROM. When you return the old chip ICD will return $5 to you. This way you don't have to go without your MIO while your chips are in the mail, and the end cost is $10.

Since the software is resident in the MIO, it takes no memory in the computer. Once configured, it stays in memory within the MIO. Also, the MIO comes with it's own power source. You can turn off your computer and the ramdisk stays intact.

About the only thing I don't like about the MIO is the very short cable. It is only about 3 inches to prevent interference, and the MIO must sit directly behind the computer. The footprint is about the size of a disk drive, but is only 1 inch high. If you have a cramped working space, this will really cause a problem. Also, because of the heat generated by the board, you can not set anything on top of it or you will cause some problems with the ventilation.

Another bad mark goes for the lack of the addition of Sparta-Dos. The first thing you read in the manual is they strongly recommend the use of Sparta-Dos with the MIO. Most DOS's do not support such large amounts of memory, and others I have tested acted funny. So why can't they throw in a copy for free? Remember all of those US Doublers, Ramdo's, and R-Time cartridges you purchased that came with Sparta-Dos? If you do not already have a copy of Sparta-Dos, expect to order one right away, and at a cost of around $40.

The modem port has an improved version of the P:R: software. Some of the bugs that prevented you from using certain terminal programs have been fixed, and will now run without modification. Some of the programs tested include Hometerm, Express, R-Scope, Omniterm, and Backtalk.

The MIO also responds to the XIO configuration commands, so you can control all the ports or change configurations from basic.

The documentation does a very good job in describing the interface, and lists a number of hard drives by manufacturers that are compatable with the MIO. As mentioned earlier, you must have a controller built in to the drive or you will have to supply one.

Some hard drives have controllers built in and can be recognized by a 50 pin SASI/SCSI interface on the drive itself. Most commonly found hard drive do NOT have controllers built in. These drives are characterized by a 34 pin and 20 pin edge connector. In order to operate this class of drives, you need a SASI or SCSI interface controller card (NOT an IBM compatable type!). These controllers have a 34 pin edge connecter and several dual rows of 10 pins on one side and a 50 pin SASI/SCSI connector on the other end. Tom Harker at ICD said in a phone conversation in mid-November that they would sell a SASI controller through ICD since many people have asked for them after failing to find them available locally. He expects to have them by the time you read this for around $135.

The MIO can be updated to allow the networking of hard drives. This will allow up to 8 MIOs and 8 hard drives to be connected along the same cable and communicate with the same drive concurrently. This enables several systems to share the same programs and data. The cost for this upgrade is $50.

Pretty neat, huh? I wouldn't part with mine for anything! Who thought of this in the first place? Well, highly informed sources claim that Jimmy Rambo had just finished a new 1-meg ramcard and went running down the hallway to the marketing department. Meanwhile, another inventer had just finished modifing the P:R: Connection to run a harddisk drive, and raced out of his office, crashing into Rambo.

"Hey" cried Rambo, "You got your interface stuck in my ramdisk!"

"NO! You got your ramdisk stuck in my interface" shouted the technician.

There was a long pause, then they both dashed back to their offices to create the MIO!

And the rest is history.....

Review

WIZARD'S CROWN
SSI Atari 800/XL/XE $39.95
Reviewed by Thomas Warren

If you like playing Fantasy games like Dungeons and Dragons (tm), you'll like Wizard's Crown from SSI. It's part tactical battle and an adventure game, with lots of control over a party of eight players. The game is large in scope (I never did get very far outside the city walls), with nice graphics. Wizard's Crown is like most other games from SSI, using keyboard commands instead of a joystick.

The game play is more intricate than in normal computer games involving a party. You can assign one character to be a point man from 0-8 movement squares from the rest of the party. The battles (there's lots of them) can be performed in two ways, one is to let the computer do everything, which is fast, and two go to a tactical battle map and do everything yourself. Although the second way takes longer, I prefered it. Seeing an adversary lying on the ground stunned or dead is much more life-like that just words.

During a battle, players give or receive either light or serious wounds, or light or heavy bleeding which can change the outcome of battle. A player can also be stunned, rendering him/her incapable of fighting. One nice feature, assuming you've survived, is healing which can be performed by players with Karma. They can heal light, heal all serious wounds, heal all light or heavy bleeding, to one or more players until their Karma is depleted. Karma can be replenished by praying a one of the various temples found in the game.

SSI was gratious enough to provide eight players already to go, so you don't have to make your own. A nice touch, and a good way to learn the game, although the documentation is a must, and nicely done.

The one major fault I found was the creating of the game disks. Three are needed for play, and they have to be done at the same time. One one drive this takes a long time. The game provides for the use of two drives which would help. The creating routine is like the Dup Disk in DOS, which I would have preferred, but you can't have everything.

I recommend this game if you are really into Dungeons and Dragons as a board game. If you are just a casual player, it might be too intricate. It's well worth the price of $39.95.

Last Hacks

How Big is a Bit?
by Brian Goluska (CHAOS)

A fellow worker and I were trying to make two computers from different manufacturers talk to each other over serial ports. (If you want to know how easy this is, try wiring your car radio controls to your microwave oven). After several unsuccessful hours of work, we decided that there was a timing problem between the two machines, and we stepped back to consider every aspect of the problem.

Serial ASCII characters are often defined with a picture, showing how they are transmitted serially, out a serial port or over a communications line, like a telephone line. This picture often looks like this:

Representing a start bit, eight data bits, and a stop bit. Or, depending on the language being sent, maybe a start bit, seven data bits, a parity bit, and one or two stop bits.

We started calculating what was happening. We were directly connecting the two computers, so the signal was moving at roughly the speed of electricity, 186,000 miles per second. At 9600 baud, in our case 9600 bits per second, a character takes roughly a millisecond. 186,000 miles divided by 9600 bits means that each bit is 19.4 miles long. Since we only had 50 feet of wire between the machines, no wonder we had a problem!

At other baud rates, serial bits get even bigger. At 1200 bits per second, each bit is about 155 miles long. At 300 bits per second, a bit reaches 620 miles!

I can only conclude that serial communication is theoretically impossible over short distances. With a 300 baud modem, only locations more than 620 miles away can be called successfully. A 1200 baud modem allows calls as close as 155 miles. This explains why people are willing to pay high prices for faster and faster modems.

EXPLANATION APPROACH #1 (FUN):
We all know that it IS possible to call friends and Bulletin Boards within the same city and still have our modems work. This is because 94% of all telephone routing is now done by sattilite, which are orbiting the Earth at a sufficient distance to allow baud rates as low as 110. Occasionally, your phone call will be switched directly (through some foul-up at the phone company). These are the times you experience trouble getting your modem to respond properly. Hang up and redial.

EXPLANATION APPROACH #2 (NO FUN):
While the above is mathematically correct, and plausible, we know that modems work when connected serially a few feet away. The chips that send and receive only sense sudden changes in voltage, and it is the timing between the edge of each change that carries the information. So the receiving chip gets an edge for the start bit, and begins its timing. Subsequent edges are interpreted as the beginning of subsequent bits only if they change from 1 to 0 or 0 to 1. So there is no need for the "bit" to exist all at one time on a wire too short to physically accomodate its length.

WHEN IS A BIT NOT A BIT?

In closing, there is also the mystery of the stop bit (or bits— many terminal programs ask "1 or 2 stop bits?"). The stop bit is merely an idle line for 1 bit length, so if the last valid data bit is equal to the stop bit, there is no need to send a stop bit. Some receivers even assume a stop bit is received if the line is idle for 1/2 of a bit length. If the stop bit can't be distinguished from an idle line, does the stop bit exist? In fact, the stop bit can only exist if it is NOT there. If the first stop bit isn't there, what about the second stop bit? Is it, too, only there if it isn't there, and how can you tell if it's the second one or the first one thats not there? Be sure to read my upcoming book, "The Second Stop Bit and Bigfoot, a Rational Approach to the Evidence".
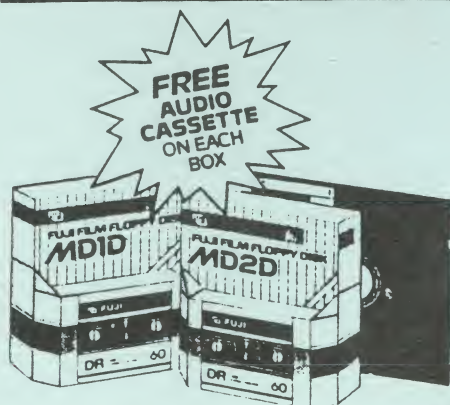
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